

(12) INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(19) World Intellectual Property Organization
International Bureau



(43) International Publication Date
21 December 2000 (21.12.2000)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number
WO 00/77812 A2

- (51) International Patent Classification⁷: **H01J** **ZHANG, Xin [CN/US]; 7 Rice Street #1, Brookline, MA 02445 (US). GIESE, Roger, W. [US/US]; 56 Oakland Avenue, Quincy, MA 02170 (US).**
- (21) International Application Number: **PCT/US00/40173**
- (22) International Filing Date: **8 June 2000 (08.06.2000)** (74) Agents: **HEINE, Holliday, C. et al.; Weingarten, Schur-
gin, Gagnebin & Hayes LLP, Ten Post Office Square,
Boston, MA 02109 (US).**
- (25) Filing Language: **English**
- (26) Publication Language: **English** (81) Designated States (national): **JP, US.**
- (30) Priority Data:
60/138,466 10 June 1999 (10.06.1999) US (84) Designated States (regional): **European patent (AT, BE,
CH, CY, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC,
60/139,170 15 June 1999 (15.06.1999) US NL, PT, SE).**
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EASTERN UNIVERSITY [US/US]; 360 Huntington Av-
enue, Boston, MA 02115 (US).** Published:
— *Without international search report and to be republished
upon receipt of that report.*
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*For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guid-
ance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the begin-
ning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.*

(54) Title: **LIGHT-INDUCED ELECTRON CAPTURE AT A SURFACE**

(57) Abstract: New conditions have been developed which increase the performance and usefulness of laser induced electron cap-
ture mass spectrometry (LI-EC-MS). Light from a light source, generally a laser, is used to activate an electron of a surface, preferably
a metal surface, where the light energy is below the work function of the surface. The electron is transferred to an analyte on the
surface, forming an anionic product from the analyte, where the anionic product can simultaneously undergo desorption for detection
in a mass spectrometer. Alternatively, the analyte can receive an electron from an intermediate compound having a low ionization
potential which is deposited on a surface along with the analyte. The new conditions not only give a sharper or more intense signal
from an analyte than prior forms of LI-EC-MS, but utilize ordinary MS equipment. Further, the new procedure even enables detec-
tion of species, such as nucleic acids labeled with polyfluoro-containing groups, that previously were beyond the reach of LI-EC-MS
techniques.

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